

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 9, 2018

Mr. Carl A. Taylor  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
NYSEG and RG&E  
P.O. Box 5224  
Binghamton, NY 13902-5224

Dear Mr. Taylor,

We are writing to express our deep concern over the extended power outages for thousands of New York households following back-to-back winter storms Riley and Quinn. While these storms resulted in widespread damage, dangerous roads and conditions, downed trees, and power outages across the Northeast, it is unacceptable that many of our constituents have been without power for a week, and potentially will remain without power for even longer. We recognize that the focus must now be on doing everything possible to restore service to all of your impacted customers as quickly as possible, however, lessons must also be learned and applied to ensure that this type of situation does not occur again.

Following Superstorm Sandy in 2012, the State of New York established a Moreland Commission to examine New York power utility companies' response to a number of storms, including Sandy, as well as Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. In its report published on June 22, 2013, the commission identified specific concerns about NYSEG's lack of adequate preparation to respond to major storm events. Accordingly, we would like answers to the following questions related to those recommendations and their implementation, as well as concerns that have been raised with us about NYSEG's response during the past week.

1. What steps has NYSEG taken to implement the recommendations of the June 22, 2013 Moreland Commission report to improve preparedness, address resource shortages, and improve coordination with local officials and public outreach?
2. What steps did NYSEG take to adjust its response plan as the predicted severity of the storm increased?
3. When did NYSEG request mutual aid from other utilities, and how did you determine the number of crews to request? Do you believe that you requested and received a sufficient amount of mutual aid?
4. What steps will NYSEG take to review its procedures for communicating with and addressing the concerns local officials, including how information shared with community liaisons, is handled?

5. We have heard concerns that individuals were misinformed by text messages and phone calls that that power was restored to their homes when it was not, and that the outage maps posted online were inaccurate. What was the reason for these inaccuracies, and what steps will NYSEG take to review and improve the methods by which outage and power restoration information, including estimated time of restoration, is shared with the public?
6. What is NYSEG's vegetation management plan, and will that plan be changed in the aftermath of these storms?
7. Given that because of the impacts of climate change, we are likely to experience more extreme weather events, including severe winter storms in New York, what steps will NYSEG take to address grid resiliency?
8. Did NYSEG follow all of the processes and protocols outlined in its emergency response plan? How can those processes and protocols be improved and strengthened to ensure a more effective response to future storms?

Our constituents deserve accountability and answers to these questions, and they deserve to know whether the power utilities that serve them are fully prepared to meet the challenges that lie ahead, and whether they will heed the lessons learned from these storms to improve disaster response in the future. We hope that you will take these concerns seriously and work to improve the preparedness and resiliency of NYSEG's electric grid without delay.

Thank you for your attention to this letter, and we look forward to your response to our questions.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator